

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

5 1 A method for hosting entity-specific photo-sharing websites for entity-specific image capture devices, comprising the steps of:

 providing software for the entity-specific image capture devices that causes the entity-specific image capture devices to transmit entity ID information when the image capture devices transmit images over the Internet;

10 providing an online photo-sharing service capable of hosting the entity-specific photo-sharing websites for each of the entities, such that when the image capture devices connect to photo-sharing service, the photo-sharing service uses the entity ID received from the image capture devices to automatically associate the images to the photo-sharing website of the identified entity.

15 2 The method of claim 1 further including the step of storing the entity ID in the image capture devices during manufacturing.

20 3 The method of claim 1 further including the step of storing the entity ID in the image capture devices subsequent to manufacturing.

4 4 The method of claim 2 further including the step of providing a plurality of entity IDs, wherein each entity ID identifies a different entity.

5 The method of claim 4 further including the step of providing an entity ID identifying a camera manufacturer and an entity ID identifying a user.

6 The method of claim 5 further including the step of storing an entity account in a
5 database corresponding to different entity IDs.

7 The method of claim 6 further including the step of associating with each of the entity accounts, web pages comprising the corresponding entity-specific photo-sharing website, and user account numbers of authorized users.

8 The method of claim 7 further including the step of matching the entity ID information received from each image capture device with the corresponding entity account in the database.

9 The method of claim 8 further including the step of automatically associating the received images with the entity-specific photo-sharing website of the identified entity.

10 An online photo-sharing system, comprising:

an online photo-sharing service for hosting respective websites for a plurality of
20 entities, wherein each of the entities controls a set of digital cameras; and

digital camera software that is customized for each of the entities, such that when the software customized for a particular entity is executed in the entity's digital cameras during a network connection, the software causes the digital cameras to automatically upload images

to the website hosted for that particular entity.

11 The online photo-sharing system of claim 10 wherein the digital camera software causes the digital camera to transmit at least one entity ID identifying the entity that the software was customized for.

12 The online photo-sharing system of claim 11 wherein the entity ID is stored in the digital camera during manufacturing.

13 The online photo-sharing system of claim 11 wherein the entity ID is stored in the digital camera subsequent to manufacturing.

14 The online photo-sharing system of claim 13 wherein at least one set of digital cameras is controlled by a hierarchal relationship of entities.

15 The online photo-sharing system of claim 14 wherein the digital camera transmits the entity ID of each of the entities in the hierarchal relationship.

16 The online photo-sharing system of claim 15 wherein the entities include at least one of a camera manufacturer, a business, a government agency, and end-users.

17 The online photo-sharing system of claim 11 wherein the online photo-sharing service includes a server and a database for hosting the respective websites.

18 The online photo-sharing system of claim 17 wherein the database stores entity account information for each one the entities.

19 The online photo-sharing system of claim 18 wherein the server matches each one of the entity ID's received with one of the entity accounts.

20 The online photo-sharing system of claim 20 wherein the online photo-sharing service derives revenue from the entities.

21 The online photo-sharing system of claim 20 wherein the online photo-sharing service shares revenue with multiple entities that are in a hierarchal relationship.

22 The online photo-sharing system of claim 20 wherein the respective websites are customized for each of the entities, such that when users visit the respective websites over the network, it appears to the user that the respective websites are hosted by the corresponding entities.

23 A method for automatically sending images from entity-specific cameras to entity-specific websites, comprising the steps of:

- (a) providing a plurality of cameras with means for allowing the cameras to communicate over a network;
- (b) customizing the cameras for different entities by loading at least one entity ID into the camera;

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- (c) providing an online photo-sharing service for hosting a plurality of photo-sharing websites;
 - (d) customizing each of the photo-sharing websites for a respective entity to create entity-specific websites, each of the entity-specific websites being identified by a respective entity ID;
 - (e) transmitting the entity ID from the camera to the photo-sharing website when uploading images to the photo-sharing service; and
 - (f) receiving the images and associating the images with the entity-specific website identified by the entity ID.
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24 The method of claim 23 further including the step of customizing at least one of the cameras for a hierarchal relationship of entities.

25 The method of claim 24 further including the steps of providing the entity ID as a set of hierarchal entity IDs.

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26 The method of claim 25 further including the steps of storing the entity-specific websites on a database accessed by a server.

20 27 The method of claim 26 further including the step of creating an entity account in the database for every entity ID, and associating each of the entity-specific websites with the corresponding entity account.

